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01/19/2000 12:46 PM

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cc:

Subject: Start-Up of Low-Level Waste Shipments from Fernald, Ohio to NTS

----- Forwarded by Bill Costa/HQ/Caltrans/CAGov on 01/19/2000 12:41 PM -----



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Subject Start-Up of Low-Level Waste Shipments from Fernald, Ohio to NTS

**** High Priority ****

DOE-Fernald just sent out a letter saying that they plan to begin this month shipments of low-level radioactive waste to the Nevada Test Site using the southern route. We will fax the letter to Jim Abrames/Debbie Pierce at CHP and Ben Tong/Rich Osborne at OES. Please let us know if any other agencies would like a copy of this letter.

In response to requests by Nevada and Arizona, Fernald agreed not to ship over Hoover Dam and through Las Vegas as long as safe alternative routes are available. During the summer and early autumn months, truck shipments have used a northern route to NTS. During winter months, they will use the southern route, including routes in California.

Four trucks will leave Fernald on January 24 from Fernald for shipment to the Nevada Test Site. It is not clear whether these trucks will use CA 127 or NV 160. These wastes are expected to be LSA 1 and LSA 2 shipments.

The routes they plan to use through April are I-40, entering California near Needles and connecting with US 95 to Clark County, Nevada. Trucks will reenter California on Nipton Road and connect with I-15. At this point, trucks will either travel north on I-15 back into Nevada and connect with Nevada route 160 to US 95 to the NTS, or they will drive south to CA 127 at Baker. The trucks will go north on CA 127 to Nevada, continuing on NV 373 to US 95 to NTS. They plan to use these southern routes ~~however~~. They will use three motor carriers: two will be using CA 127 and one will use NV 160. However, the actual number of shipments for each route is expected to be the same. Fernald will give us the projected number of shipments.

The letter from Fernald gives the following information:

Typically, the number of shipments leaving Fernald for NTS is up to ~~1000~~ k. They will instruct their carriers to avoid CA 127 during periods of flash flooding and seasonal peak tourist traffic. The trucks will have satellite tracking and

communication units, so they can be notified of emergency conditions such as flash floods.

Trucks will be designated "exclusive use" trucks (49 CFR Part 173.403) and will carry only low-level waste. The waste will be generally trash, rubble, and debris from environmental clean up activities with some process residues (wastes leftover from process materials and wastes from production operations) contaminated with uranium and thorium. They expect them to be classified as LSA-1 and LSA-II shipments. The estimated maximum dose rate from uranium will be 1-2 millirem per hour on contact with the truck, while the estimated maximum dose rate for thorium will be 5-10 millirem per hour two meters from the truck. The DOT limit for a vehicle transporting radioactive material by exclusive use shipment is 10 millirem per hour at two meters from the truck. DOT labels and placards will be used. Fernald will conduct radiation and contamination surveys prior to departure. In an emergency, the motor carrier will notify the state and local authorities, as well as emergency management people in Fernald, Ohio.

We have written DOE several letters expressing our concerns about the poor road conditions of SR 127, remote and long delays in emergency response capability, as well as periodic flash flooding and peak tourist use of SR 127. Their response is that emergency response training will be provided through WGA and that DOE will work with Inyo County and the State to identify times of peak tourism and flash flooding potential along SR 127. Fernald agrees to avoid using SR 127 during peak tourist traffic.

WGA funding is not yet available for emergency response training in southern California. Nevertheless, the trucks are ready to roll the end of this month. We need to work with DOE, WGA, and OES on this emergency response issue. There are several things that are needed:

1. Emergency Response: WGA, DOE, OES need to discuss emergency response concerns (conference call with WGA (Ron Ross), DOE-Nevada (Frank DiSanza), OES (Ben Tong and Rich Osborne).
2. Peak Tourist Periods: Inyo County (Andrew Remus) and Death Valley National Park officials need to provide a list of dates between November and April for peak tourist use of SR 127, so that DOE can avoid shipments during these periods.
3. Flash Flooding: At our last transportation meeting in December, Caltrans agreed to look into how DOE can be notified of high flash flooding potential on SR 127. We need to clarify how the information on high flash flooding potential can be given to DOE and the carrier.